CLAIMS

The invention claimed is:

1. A method for controlling log files comprising the steps of:

determining an importance level for a received log entry;

storing said received log entry in a first file if said importance level is above a predetermined threshold and in a second file otherwise;

switching storage from said first file to an alternate first file in response to said first file reaching its predetermined capacity;

switching storage from said alternate first file to said first file in response to said alternate first file reaching its predetermined capacity;

switching storage from said second file to an alternate second file in response to said second file reaching its predetermined capacity; and

switching storage from said alternate second file to said second file in response to said alternate second file reaching its predetermined capacity.

2. A method for controlling log files comprising the steps of:

determining an importance level for a received log entry;

storing said received log entry in alternating ones of a first file pair if said importance level is above a predetermined threshold, said alternation occurring as each file in the first pair reaches a predetermined capacity; and

storing said received log entry in alternating ones of a second file pair if said importance level is below a predetermined threshold, said alternation occurring as each file in the second pair reaches a predetermined capacity.

3. A method for controlling log files comprising the steps of:

determining an importance level for a received log entry;

storing said received log entry in a select file of a first plurality of files if said importance level is above a predetermined threshold, said selection within said first plurality occurring in cyclic rotation as each file in said first plurality of files reaches a predetermined capacity; and

storing said received log entry in a select file of a second plurality of files if said importance level is below a predetermined threshold, said selection within said second plurality occurring in cyclic rotation as each file in said second plurality of files reaches a predetermined capacity.

4. The method of claim 3 in which said importance level is expressed as a desired duration of retention.

5. The method of claim 3 in which the predetermined capacity for said files in said first plurality of files is the same for all of the files in said first plurality of files.

6. The method of claim 3 in which the predetermined capacity for said files in said second plurality of files is the same for all of the files in said second plurality of files.

7. The method of claim 3 further including the step of generating a report from a plurality of log file entries retrieved from one of said first or second plurality of files in the same time order in which the log entries were stored.

8. The method of claim 3 in which all of said log file entries are of the same length.

9. The method of claim 3 in which the number of files in said first plurality of files is two.

10. The method of claim 3 in which the number of files in said second plurality of files is two.

11. The method of claim 3 in which the number of files in said first plurality of files is the same as the number of files in said second plurality of files.

12. The method of claim 3 in which the number of distinct importance levels is two.

13. The method of claim 3 in which said log file entries include a time stamp.

14. A data processing system comprising:

a central proceesing unit;

a random access memory for storing data and programs for execution by said central processing unit;

a nonvolatile storage device;

program means stored within said memory for (1) receiving log file entries having an importance level associated therewith and for (2) storing said log file entries in either a first or second plurality of files on said nonvolatile storage device and for (3) selecting within said first or second plurality of files a particular file selected on the basis of log event history preservation within said respective pluralities of files.

15. A computer program product stored on a machine readable medium having program means thereon for (1) receiving log file entries having an importance level associated therewith and for (2) storing said log file entries in either a first or second plurality of files on a nonvolatile storage device and for (3) selecting within said first or second plurality of files a particular file selected on the basis of log event history preservation within said respective pluralities of files.

16. A method for controlling log files comprising the steps of:

determining an importance level for a received log entry;

storing said received log entry in a select file of a first plurality of files if said importance level is above a predetermined threshold, said selection within said first plurality occurring in cyclic rotation so as to preserve log event file histories as long as possible; and

storing said received log entry in a select file of a second plurality of files if said importance level is below a predetermined threshold, said selection within said second plurality occurring in cyclic rotation so as to preserve log event file histories as long as possible.